



South Dakota Department of the Military South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



EXPANDING THE SEA OF GOODWILL

Over 125 community leaders from the Sioux Falls area attended the "Coming Together: Expanding the Sea of Goodwill in Post 9/11 America" conference held in Sioux Falls last week.

The Sioux Falls Area Community Foundation (SFACF) had two goals for this event. The first one was to raise awareness of the unique challenges military personnel and their families face with deployments. The second goal was to inspire all participants to make a commitment to expand the "sea of goodwill."

Keynote speaker Colonel David Sutherland identified the resources available to veterans and their families, as well as the unmet needs. During this conference they referenced data from the "War and Sacrifice in the Post 9/11 Era" study conducted by the Pew Research Center. (The study can be reviewed at the following link: <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/2111/veterans-post-911-wars-iraq-afghanistan-civilian-military-veterans>.)

At the conclusion of the conference, participants were asked to complete commitment forms. The goal being to identify the gaps, find the resources and improve in making the re-entry to civilian life easier and more sustainable for veterans and their families.

Funding sources and grant programs were identified and reviewed.

The SFACF attracts, manages and distributes charitable gifts for the Sioux Falls area.

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If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more,
do more and become more, you are a leader

John Quincy Adams

LOLLEY RECOGNIZED FOR HIS SERVICE TO VETERANS

Friday afternoon, January 13, leaders within the veteran network in western South Dakota gathered to honor Jerry Lolley on his retirement. Jerry has served as the Meade County Veterans Service Officer since 1992.

Paul Gremse, Field Officer for the SD Department of Veterans Affairs, read a letter from Department of Veterans Affairs Interim Secretary Matt Michels. Lt. Governor Michels commended Jerry for his relentless work ethic and his commitment to South Dakota's veterans. Stephen DiStasio and Peter Henry presented Lolley with a certificate of appreciation from the VABHHCS. Sandy Massey read a letter of appreciation from Senator John Thune.

Joe Roberts and Darrell Shoemaker from Senator Tim Johnson's office read the accomplishments of Jerry's nearly 40 years of service

(military and as VSO). This same information was read into the congressional record by Senator Johnson on December 12, 2011 (a copy of the congressional record is included with this newsletter). Attendees recognized Jerry for his nearly 40 years of dedicated military and public service to veterans and their families.

Jerry served in the United States Air Force from 1968 to 1988 and retired as an E-7.



VABHHCS CREATIVE ARTS FESTIVAL

The VA Black Hills Health Care System is hosting Veterans Creative Arts shows to jury entries for the 2012 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival to be held in Boston, October 2012.

The annual Festival is a culmination of artistic talent competitions in art, music, drama and dance. The program is open to all veterans treated in VA medical centers and clinics across the country. Entrants must compete through the VA at which they are registered, and entries must have been created after April 2011. Veterans are invited to submit entries in the following categories: fine and applied arts, crafts and performing arts (music, instrumental, drama and dance), and creative writing. Performing arts entries must be no more than three minutes in length, and there are certain size restrictions for fine and applied arts.

The Fort Meade show will be held on March 7 and the Hot Springs show is on March 19. Entries for the Fort Meade show must be submitted no later than February 10 and the Hot Springs show by March 9.

Interested Veterans should call Mike Ellis, (605) 347-2511 x7658), Kyle Doerges (605-347-2511 x7582) at Fort Meade, or Debbie Pate at Hot Springs (605-745-2000 x2924), for category information and show details.



SOUTH DAKOTA NATIONAL GUARD CONDUCTS RESCUE EXERCISE IN JEWEL CAVE

The South Dakota National Guard's 82nd Civil Support Team paired up with personnel from Jewel Cave National Monument to conduct a mock cave rescue and emergency response exercise Thursday, Jan. 19.

The 82nd CST and Jewel Cave officials used the exercise as an opportunity to train in rescue operations and response to releases of chemical, biological or radioactive agents. The 82nd CST is South Dakota's all-hazard response team with emphasis in the areas of chemical, biological and radiological incidents.

The emergency response exercise was designed around a scenario in which a Jewel Cave employee discovers a radioactive container located inside the cave. Personnel from the Monument notified law enforcement officials of the potential threat, who then contacted the 82nd based at Ellsworth Air Force Base.

The unit dispatched 14 personnel and equipment to Jewel Cave and began their investigation.

Two survey members from the CST, Air Force Staff Sgt. Dustin Clement and Army Sgt. Eric Haivala, entered the cave searching for the radiation source using detection equipment. The team found the radiation source and using a cave phone reported to their commander for further instructions on how to handle the material.

This exercise gives the Guard Units a unique opportunity that they wouldn't get otherwise, to train in an environment that is really not a normal situation for them.



VETERANS COMMISSION TO MEET

The South Dakota Veterans Commission will meet Tuesday, February 7, via teleconference.

Deputy Secretary Harding will provide the Commissioners with a legislative update, as well as an update on the Veterans Home projects, Veterans Preference and the VANHHCS.

A complete agenda can be found on the Department's website at:

<http://mva.sd.gov/veterans%20commission%20meetings.html>

LARGEST ANNUAL WHEELCHAIR SPORTS EVER IN THE WORLD

Registration is open for the 32nd National Veterans Wheelchair Games, the largest annual wheelchair sports event in the world. More than 500 veterans from across the United States, Puerto Rico and Great Britain are expected to compete in the Games, taking place June 25-30, 2012, in Richmond, Va. – the site of the very first National Veterans Wheelchair Games held in 1981.

The Games, presented by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs and Paralyzed Veterans of America, are open to all U.S. military veterans who use wheelchairs for sports competition due to spinal cord injuries, neurological conditions, amputations or other mobility impairments. The 32nd Games will be co-hosted by the Hunter Holmes McGuire VA Medical Center and the Virginia Mid-Atlantic Chapter of Paralyzed Veterans of America.

Adaptive sports play a crucial role in getting people back into life after serious injury, and the Wheelchair Games are often a life-changing experience for these athletes, representing a unique combination of competition, rehabilitation and fun. The Games are made possible through the generous support of national host sponsors, Altria Group, Invacare and UPS.

Competitive events will take place at the Greater Richmond Convention Center, Hanover Lanes Bowling Center, The Conservation Club of Virginia, Inc., in Charles City, Sports Backers Stadium, Mary Munford Elementary School and Byrd Park. The 32nd Games will include competitions in 17 different events such as swimming, basketball, table tennis, archery, and wheelchair slalom, which is a timed obstacle course. The athletes compete in all events against others with similar athletic ability, competitive experience or age.

In addition to the competitions and the opening and closing ceremonies, the Games will include a "Kids Day at the Games" on Friday, June 29, at Sports Backers Stadium. Local children with disabilities will have the opportunity to interact with the athletes, participate in sporting events, and watch veterans compete.

Veterans interested in competing may download the registration packet from the Games' website at www.wheelchairgames.va.gov or contact Marlene Pratt at (804) 675-5000, ext. 3969, or Kristin Windon at (804) 675-5002. The deadline for interested athletes to complete their registration is April 15.



CELEBRATE NATIONAL WEAR RED DAY®

Governor Dugaard has proclaimed February as American Heart Month in South Dakota. One in three adults, an estimated 80.7 million Americans, are effected by cardiovascular disease, claiming the life of one American every 38 seconds – that's nearly 2,400 people every single day. Heart disease is still the number 1 cause of women's deaths, taking the life of 1 in 3 women each year.

First Lady Linda Dugaard is asking everyone to join her in wearing red on Wednesday, February 1, to raise the awareness of heart disease and to make it our mission to help build healthier lives free from cardiovascular disease and stroke.

You can identify your personal level of heart health with the My Life Check assessment at www.heart.org/mylifecheck.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Feb. 7—South Dakota Veterans Commission Meeting Conference Call

Feb. 18—SFVAHCC Variety Show

Mar. 7—VABHHCS Veterans Creative Arts Show—Fort Meade

Mar. 19—VABHHCS Veterans Creative Arts Show—Hot Springs

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